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A STAR'S SURROUNDINGS.

A SLATTERLY, unwholesome-looking woman of fifty, or a little more, but whose real age it is not easy to guess ; her face haggard, deeply furrowed, and of a dull yellow colour ; her eyes wild, staring, and set in broad purple rings ; her head and bony hands always trembling : a woman with no healthy briskness, who seems to have lost heart long ago ; who drags herself hither and thither under protest, with a voice shrill, querulous, and broken, a faint, unmeaning smile for the conciliation of her lodgers, tears more than enough when any one finds fault ; add further, a dress fashionably, but not engagingly short, of the commonest material, dirty and uncared for ; coarse, iron-gray hair, not often combed ; boots without heels, and bursting at the sides—and you have your servant's landlady, Mrs Simmonds.

She complains of a dreadful gnawing pain between her shoulders ; she never has any appetite—the mere sight of food, as she says, gives her ‘quite a turn.’ She can't tell what is the matter with her ; she thinks that she must have hurt her backbone when she was young. Sometimes, she thumps it, to stop that miserable pain just for a minute. She won't take the physic that the doctor orders, because it is ‘so nasty.’ She is an ignorant woman ; she can hardly sign her name ; I doubt whether she can read, in the strict sense of the word. Her notions are all of the crudest. She has no particular religion ! In times past, she became a Catholic, but didn't like the confessional. Talked once with a minister, a Protestant, but whether of the Church of England or not, she can't say, but couldn't understand him ; never goes to any place of worship—doesn't see the good of it. She has impressions which she can't explain, and can't account for. She is bemuddled, in fact, but still not an immoral woman, or a particularly dishonest one. She can't recollect that she ever went to school. When very young, she danced, and did the horsemanship and slack-rope business, but how old she was at the time she can't say. She doesn't recollect much before this—it all seems like a fog.

Her father and mother died within twelve hours of each other—both of the cholera. She rather thinks she must have come of a good stock ; fancies her parents must have made a runaway match. Her father was a soldier, an officer, she thinks, and his wife followed the regiment.

But Mrs Simmonds shall tell her story in her own way. ‘When I was about fourteen,’ she says, ‘I had an engagement at Windsor. An elderly gentleman, who used to come regularly to the theatre, offered me marriage ; but I was scornful, and laughed at him. I should be glad to know where he is now ; if he is alive, he might help me. I wish he could ease me of this terrible pain.’ (Thump, thump.) ‘When a bit older, I danced in the ballet at the Opera-house. It was hard work, but my soul was in it, and I got on. Soon after this, I first met my husband ; he courted me more than a year : I first saw him just outside the theatre ; he used to go with me to rehearsals, and wait at the door till I came out, and now and then make me little presents. I was a fool ever to have married him ; but I was only a girl, and he was a handsome young fellow, and so I got taken in. He was a bad, drunken wretch ; a lazy, good-for-nothing fellow, who might, if he had chosen, have earned as much as two guineas a week as a mathematical-instrument maker ; but he only cared for boozing and low company. He used to beat me sometimes. At last, he ran away, and left me without a sixpence, and with three young children to provide for. I heard nothing more of him till he was in Australia, and sent a letter to say that I had driven him from home by my unbearable temper. The wretch ! Since then, I have never had another line from him.’ (Tears, cut short by that awful pain, ‘like knives being dug into one,’ and more thumps.) ‘I brought up my eldest, Tom, to my own profession. I apprenticed him to Mr Norton, who had the Queen's Dancing-rooms, Oxford Street, and he became one of his “troupe.” After this, he played in pantomimes at sixpence a night ; came on as a goblin or fairy attendant ; got a place as call-boy at Sadler's Wells, and might have done well too, for the leading tragedian took

quite a fancy to him ; but he was a ninny, and quarrelled with the stage-manager, and had to leave. After this, he had to go into the country. He was a drone, and said he was overworked and starved ; but if you take to the stage, you mustn't mind putting your shoulder to the wheel, and you don't get much money to begin with—country managers are so sharp ; but Tom might have done better if he had pleased. He came back nearly a skeleton, poor fellow. At Glasgow—he was engaged at some theatre there—he lived for three weeks on nothing but oatmeal porridge, and short allowance of that. From Scotland he went to Cardiff, but never got paid. I managed to send him half-a-crown, and he said it just saved him from starving. At one time, he set up a travelling entertainment ; but it failed, as everything did that he took in hand, because he had no energy. After that, he got a place as "super" at Drury Lane, but the theatre closed at the end of a month, and then I had to help him as well as I could ; but I soon saw that as long as he had something to eat, and a coat to his back, he was a regular lazibones, and didn't care to try and better himself.

'As for Dick, I laid out money to give him a good start in the navy, but I was cheated by my lawyer, and my darling had to begin as a cabin-boy. I didn't know it at the time, or it would have broken my heart, but he tumbled from the mast-head in a gale, and a great piece had to be taken out of his skull, and one leg has been shorter than the other ever since.' (Tears.) 'But even as a baby he was always tumbling. When only a year and a half old, he fell from the first-floor window into the garden, and was none the worse for it. He fell from the second floor the next time, and had to be taken to the hospital. I heard of the accident when I came back from giving my dancing-lessons in the evening. I had a deal of work then. Besides my academy, which assembled twice a week on the ground floor, the parlour and bedroom being thrown into one, I taught pupils at their own homes. Round about Lambeth there are good families—carriage-folk, and I went to a school on this side of the water, and another across the park. What dreadful work it used to be coming back on stormy nights, when there was rain or snow, and having to stand in damp clothes, teaching, when one's boots were soaked through, and without refreshment, or any one caring to offer any ! Perhaps it was that which gave me this horrible pain.' (Thump.) 'Just like so many knives. I believe, after all, that the bone is broken.'

'Dolly was a beautiful child, and as clever as she was pretty. I put her on the table and began to teach her to dance when she was three years old. After that, I took her to the theatre, and she played child-parts, appearing in the pantomimes in the middle of a flower, or in the heart of an apple that opened at the touch of Harlequin's wand. She had lovely fair hair, and great, beautiful, wondering eyes. She was never a bit afraid. All the people in the theatre loved her. The manager, who was a regular old growler, called her his pet. By-and-by, she took to dancing, and once, when she had a *pas de seul*, she did it so cleverly that it was called for again, the very manager himself, who had gone to the "front" to see how it went, joining in the applause. When she was older, she was engaged as *première danseuse* at the same theatre, and it was then that she first came across that fellow—fine

stories he told—who married her. He sat in the stalls night after night, and left flowers and jewellery at the stage-entrance. His mother was well off, but he had little besides what she allowed him, and his expectations. But Dolly, poor silly girl, didn't find this out till it was too late. He was an ensign in the army, and "I am that proud," he used to say to me, "that if my own mother spoke to me as you do, I'd never wish to see her again." Dolly was so taken with him, stupid little thing, that she got quite to forget her poor mother. She was another girl. When the marriage took place, it was like a dream. I could hardly believe it was my Dolly who was dressed in such finery and so courted. Then there were the bridesmaids, and three broughams, and the coachmen with favours in their hats and on their coats, and the wedding-breakfast spread in this very house. It troubled me then, and it has troubled me since, and it does so now. When Dolly got up to say good-bye, she was as cold as a queen. I suppose she was ashamed of the old mother who had toiled for her. She just kissed me, as if she was glad to have it over, and then turned to her husband, and they were gone. Oh, she was a cold girl !

'He took a house for her in Colchester Street, Pimlico, and furnished it splendidly ; but he turned Dolly's heart away from her home. He was a Catholic, and she became one too ; and after that, she was always at the church, or with her prayers, or with the priest ; so I scarcely ever saw her, and I left off trying to at last, for I am as 'igh and 'aughty as the best of them, and a parent has no call to stoop to her daughter. At last she went to such a pitch, giving money to churches and schools and what not—her old mother drudging, out in all weathers, with hardly enough to eat the while—that her husband wouldn't have any more of it. They had a quarrel, for she was a spirited girl, but he gave orders that no priest should be let into his house in future. In less than a year, their grand place had to be sold up. The great fortune that Dolly's husband had boasted about came to an end. It was only four thousand pounds, but girls think money in a lump more than it is. If I had known how things were, she shouldn't have married him. His mother, who despised the match—a proud, hard woman—continued his allowance, but wouldn't do anything more. Man and wife can't live on a hundred a year as gentry ; and Dolly, who was a clever girl, and had got to despise her fine officer, began to look about her. She had a beautiful voice, though I had never guessed it ; but I have heard her sing since, and know it to be the truth. She began to take pains with her music, and the gentleman who taught her—she had managed to save up a little money on her own account—said that if she went on with it she would be sure to be a success by-and-by. I had a prejudice against him at the time, but it turns out that he is old enough to be her father, and I am sure I am thankful if he has done any good to Dolly. A separation took place before long ; my poor pet and her husband couldn't agree. Perhaps it was best for both of them. But Dolly's heart was quite turned from her mother, and I hadn't even a letter from her for more than two years. She went to Italy to study ; she came out there, and made a great hit. At Florence, the gentlemen took the horses out of her carriage, and dragged it home themselves. They sang in chorus under her windows ; and somewhere else she had a

beautiful gold crown given her, besides a pearl necklace and bracelets. When she came back to England, she headed an opera company, and went for a tour through the provinces. Poor stupid Tom, whom she promised to make a gentleman, was her secretary, and a deal of good he must have been to her; however, he spoke too plainly to please her, and she threw him over, and then he had no one to go to but his old mother, whom she had taught him to scorn.

'That was the way with Dolly; she made my boys discontented, prevented their working for an honest living, and did nothing for them after all.

'When she came back to town, I thought I would go and see her. However she had treated me, she was still my child; and as winter was coming on, I should have been glad of even so little help. I had a troublesome cough, that I must have got tramping about in the wet to my lessons, and I hadn't succeeded so well as I usually did. Dolly was living at Notting Hill then. I called there one afternoon, and they said she wasn't at home; but I knew better, for I had heard her voice when the door opened. As I said, I am a bit 'aughty, and I wouldn't be put off in that way; so I gave them to understand that I knew better. "And I won't move from here," I said, "till I see her—the bad, ungrateful child." With that the servant takes my message, and comes back to say that if I don't move, Mr Sarti—that's Dolly's music-master—will send for a policeman. "Who's he?" I cried, "to talk about policemen? Why doesn't he come down himself, and say what he has got to say?" At this, Miss Dolly appeared, and wouldn't even shake hands with me, but told me I ought to be ashamed of myself, coming there all in rags, no better than an old charwoman, and bringing disgrace on her, and making her ridiculous before her servants. "I have worked for you, Dolly—hard," was all I could say; but she only answered: "If you want money, write for it; don't come here again, or you'll certainly be given in charge." So on that I drew myself up, and said: "Don't offer me none of your paltry money, for I won't take it; and as for disgrace, it's not from me that anything of that sort will come: you'd best look at home." And with that, off I came.

'And all the while I had that Tom with me, doing nothing but sitting over the fire, and eating and drinking, and saying he didn't like this, and didn't like the other, and that there was no comfort in his home, and that I ought to manage better, till I said: "You lout, why don't you get up and work for your living, as your poor mother does? If you can't do anything else, why not help in the academy, or take some of my pupils?" "Nonsense!" he answers. "If it hadn't been for you, I should have been a made man by this time. It's all through your goings on that I broke with Dolly. I ought to have a place of my own. If I had a house in Belgrave Road or Bayswater, I might do something. There's no opening here with those infernal butchers and bakers, and such like." "You ungrateful fellow!" I cried. But there, it was all along with that girl of mine; she unsettled them, and now they've no heart or wish to work.

'She did her best to spoil Dick, and he isn't the lad he used to be. He was always so affectionate; and now he is a great noisy fellow, who comes stamping into the room, and bursts into a horse-laugh, and says I ought to give him a proper dinner every day, and not odds and ends; and

that the tea isn't strong enough, and that he wishes he could go into lodgings and leave me, and see life a bit, and not always be tied to his mammy's apron-strings. But it is his poor head—a great piece taken right out, and his leg makes him bitter, and at times he doesn't quite know what he is saying. Dolly promised to set him up, and I found she had put him to a wine-merchant's, where all day long he was in a cellar corking bottles. The shame! I soon had him away from there. In a little while, that girl of mine got him what she called a capital situation on a railway. He is there now—a clerk, and gets ten pounds a year, with the hope of a five-pound rise. He is at his office from nine till seven, except for six weeks in the summer, when they are making up the books, and then his hours are from nine to nine. Sometimes they give him work to bring home. When he first began, he spent nearly all his money over his dinner. But now I give him a hunch of bread and a bit of meat, when I have any; and in the evening he has a good tea, and as much bread and butter as he cares for. There are plenty others in the office besides himself. The highest, I am told, is a nice gentleman, and might be a friend to Dick, if he would let him. He has two hundred a year, and lives a little way out of town. He asked one of the younger clerks to take tea with him one evening, and Dick says he was told he was as affable and spoke to him as if he was no more than his equal.

'But Dolly is the only one who has really done well, and she is the worst of the lot.'

POCKET-FAMILIES.

NEARLY a century ago, a young gentleman called on Dr Johnson, and told him that, having dropped suddenly into an ample fortune, he was willing to qualify himself for genteel society by adding some literature to his other endowments, and wished to be put in an easy way of obtaining it. Dr Johnson recommended the university of Oxford; but finding that he was utterly ignorant of Latin, he withdrew that recommendation, and advised him to study natural history. A conversation occurred about animals, and their divisions into oviparous and viviparous. 'And the cat here, sir,' said the youth who wished for instruction, 'pray, to which class does she belong?' This was almost more than the doctor's patience could bear; and he replied: 'You would do well, sir, to look for some person to be always about with you, who is capable of explaining such matters, and not to come to us to know whether the cat lays eggs or not.' We quote the anecdote with the view of contrasting the present state of our knowledge regarding certain points connected with the reproduction of animals, with that which existed in the year 1776. The kangaroo, which was first seen by Captain (then Lieutenant) Cook, on the 24th of June 1770, was unknown except to zoologists; and there is no evidence that Johnson ever heard of it, although he survived Captain Cook by about six years.* This animal he might have believed in; but if he had heard of some of the

* The word *kangaroo* does not appear in any of the editions of his *Dictionary* that appeared during Johnson's lifetime; and (strangely enough) in Todd's *Johnson's Dictionary*, second edition, 1827, although the word *kangaroo* is given, the most important characteristic organ, the marsupial pouch, is not referred to.

facts we are going to relate in this article—of certain fishes, for instance, which, in place of eggs, produce litters of lively little fishes, quite fitted for all the active responsibilities of life; and of other fishes which hatch their eggs and nurse their young in their mouths—we have little doubt that he would have put them down as ‘travellers’ tales,’ and unworthy of serious consideration.

Most of our readers, on seeing the title of this article, will say: ‘Oh, it’s about kangaroos;’ and a few, whose zoological knowledge is more extensive, will include the opossums with the kangaroos. Our intention, however, is to disregard those better-known examples of animals that carry their young in their pockets, and confine our remarks to the ‘smaller deer’ who favour this practice.

In the *Batrachians*, under which title we include frogs and toads, we have a few examples of the mothers carrying their young during the period of hatching, and for some little time afterwards, in pouches situated on the back. In the Pouched Frog (*Nototremma marsupiatum*), which is found in Mexico, the female is furnished with a pouch on her back, in which the ejected eggs, when they have been fertilised, are placed by the male, and where they undergo their further development. The pouch, when filled with eggs, becomes so dilated that it extends over the whole back. Here, as in the marsupial mammals, we have a single pouch. Similar structural arrangements occur in a less well known frog, discovered in 1854, by Lichtenstein, in Venezuela, and named *Notodelphys ovifera*. In the well-known Surinam Toad (*Pipa Americana*), a series of little pouches, one for each egg, is constructed at the required time. The eggs, when laid, are fertilised, and placed by the fore-paws of the male on the back of the female, where they adhere by a glutinous secretion. The female then takes to the water, the skin swells, and the eggs become gradually embedded in cells, which are closed by a membranous structure. In these little enclosed cavities, the eggs are hatched, and the tadpole stage is passed: it is not until the young have attained their limbs, and are fit for moving about on the ground, that they break their way through their cell-covers, and struggle, head foremost, into a state of free existence. At this period, the mother leaves the water, and returns to dry land. Excellent specimens of the pouched frog and the Surinam toad may be seen in London, at the British Museum and the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons.

Here, too, we must mention the obstetric toad or nurse-frog (*Alytes obstetricans*), common in France, Switzerland, and the Rhine district, which derives its specific name from the male assisting in the exclusion of the eggs, and causing them, after they have become fertilised, to adhere to his own hind-legs by small pedicels. He then seeks the land, where he finds a concealed hole, in which he remains till the development of his young charges is sufficiently advanced, when he betakes himself to the water with his young brood. About sixty eggs, fastened on by a glutinous secretion, are thus carried about by the careful father, the mother throwing off all responsibilities.

It has been long known to naturalists, although the fact has scarcely made its way into the general circle of popular knowledge, that certain fishes present marsupial* peculiarities. Aristotle

(d. 322 B.C.), the father of Natural History, observed and described a fish which he called *Bélone*, in the female of which was a cavity in the hinder and lower part of the belly. This cavity contained its young, and at a certain period of the year it tore away the outer wall, to allow its progeny to escape. Aristotle’s errors will become apparent when we have entered a little farther into the subject. There are certain genera of fishes popularly known from their peculiar form as the Pipe-fishes and the Sea-horses, in which the males take upon themselves the office of carrying about their young in a special bag, or series of cells, as the case may be. Several species of the pipe-fishes inhabit our own shores, and have been taken on the Cornish coasts, Dublin Bay, &c.; and the sea-horses, which abound in the Mediterranean (whence Aristotle may readily have obtained them) and elsewhere, are occasionally drifted to our own shores.

The peculiarities of the pipe-fishes and sea-horses in relation to the carrying of their young gave rise to various wild speculations. Pallas, one of the most distinguished naturalists of the last half of the eighteenth century, was of opinion that each individual was possessed of a community of sexes; while Schneider, a very eminent ichthyologist, who lived a little later (d. 1822), arrived at the conclusion that all the pipe-fishes which had been examined were females, and that no males had hitherto been discovered. Recent observations, especially those of Mr Andrews of Dublin, Mr Couch, our greatest living English ichthyologist, and the Rev. Samuel Lockwood, an American naturalist, have led us to the knowledge of the following singular facts. Mr Andrews tells us that, in shoal water in Dublin Bay, he has frequently seen the Greater Pipe-fishes (*Syngnathus acus*), which attain a length of from one to two feet, lying in pairs, side by side, on a rock or stone, and that he has watched the eggs in an immature state being discharged by the female, and being received into the abdominal pouch of the male, which lies somewhat in front of the base or root of the tail. The pouch at this period secretes a glutinous matter, by which the eggs are made to adhere to its inner walls. Amongst the most remarkable points connected with this process, it may be mentioned that before the female is ready to get rid of her eggs, the slit which forms the entrance of the pouch is closed by adhesion; that at the period when the eggs are to be received, the male has the power of expanding the lappings of the pouch, so as to facilitate the entrance of the eggs; and that when the latter are fixed in their places, the opening is again closed by adhesion of the edges of the lappings, till the period arrives for the escape of the little fishes from what may literally be called their *paternal home*. Mr Couch supplies us with further and more minute details. He has found eggs in the male pouch as early in the year as April, and as late as September. Each egg in its earliest observed stage was a transparent vesicle, with a red spot directed towards the opening. When further grown, the body of the fish is seen curved into a circle, with the head projecting into a snout. At a still later period, it remains attached to the wall of the pouch; and even when the little fishes are fully developed, and able to live in the surrounding water, they will in cases of alarm fly for shelter to their former refuge, into which they

* From the Latin word *marsupium*, a pouch.

are readily received. When they no longer require this shelter, the edges of the pouch become again united. In the Broad-nosed Pipe-fishes (*Syngnathus Typhle*), and in the Sea-horses (*Hippocampus*), there is as complete a pouch as that which occurs in the greater pipe-fish. Mr Lockwood, after many failures, once succeeded in observing a male sea-horse in the act of turning out his young, to the number of several hundreds, into the world. Immediately on coming into the water, the young fish began to swing their prehensile tails, the result being that two or three of them often got their little, hair-like, caudal appendages so entangled or intertwined with one another, that as the little creatures struggled in different directions, the loss of a tail seemed an imminent catastrophe. It is much to be regretted that he did not succeed in rearing any of the brood.

Mr King, of 190 Great Portland Street, London, has been more successful than any one else in breeding sea-horses. In five journeys to the south of France in search of them, he brought back no less than one hundred and eighty-two living specimens. On one of the journeys home, one of the males gave from his pouch about six hundred young, which at the time of their extrusion were about the size of the s's used in printing this article. These curious little animals live readily in a salt-water aquarium, and will soon probably be widely distributed in a semi-domesticated state.

In other species of pipe-fishes, as the Ocean Pipe-fish (*Syngnathus aequoreus*) and the Snake Pipe-fish (*Syngnathus ophidion*), there is a singular tendency to the marsupial state, which seems checked at an early stage. In these fishes, there is no true pouch, but the eggs are transferred, as Mr Andrews has observed, by the combined action of both parents, from the female to the external abdominal surface of the male; that part of the body being, for the time, flattened, so as to retain and support the eggs during the period of their development. The eggs are here arranged in regular order, and something more than mere adhesion retains them in their places, the skin being raised up around each egg, and thus holding it in a cup from which it cannot be easily removed. There is a certain amount of resemblance between the procedure which takes place here and in the Surinam toad, in so far as the marsupial cells in each are temporary. It must, however, be recollected, that in the latter case it is the female which has charge of the family on her back.

The great moralist whose name we introduced at the beginning of this article would have been as much astounded at the idea that fishes may be viviparous as at the supposition that a mammal could lay eggs; yet, at the present day, we are acquainted with several genera of fishes which produce their young alive, amongst which may be mentioned the Blenny (of which several species are viviparous), the *Anableps tetraphthalmus* (a Surinam fish, which derives its specific name from a peculiar division of each eye by a ligamentous band, not occurring in any other vertebrate), the *Pacilia*, and the *Embiotoca* (so called from the Greek words signifying *producing living young*). The fact that these fishes bring forth their young in the form of little fishes, instead of that of eggs, is not in itself sufficient to bring them within the category of 'animals carrying their young in their pockets.' But on anatomically examining the structure of the *embiotoca*, we find they have

regular pouches for their young, and that they only differ from the animals that have been previously described in the fact, that there is here no transference of the eggs, and that the pouches are formed in the interior of the mother's body, and in connection with the structures in which the eggs are primarily found. These fishes are so remarkable that we shall enter somewhat in detail into their history.

The discoverer of these remarkable fishes (or, at all events, of the peculiarity which we are now considering) is a Mr Jackson, who, soon after his return to Boston from San Francisco in 1853, informed Professor Agassiz that while fishing in San Salita Bay, he had caught with the hook and line a fish of the perch family, containing living young. The following is Mr Jackson's account of the way in which he was led to make his discovery. After having caught two of these fishes, he determined to change his bait, and to try a piece of the thin part of the belly of the largest of the fishes already captured, when 'what was my surprise,' he observes, 'to see coming from the opening thus made a small live fish. . . . On increasing the opening, I was vastly astonished to find next to the back of the fish, and slightly attached to it, a long, very light violet bag, so clear and transparent that I could distinguish through it the shape, colour, and formation of a multitude of small fish (all fac-similes of each other), with which it was well filled.' He adds, that the number of young in the bag was nineteen, and that when they were liberated into a bucket of salt water, they were as lively and as much at home as if they had been for months accustomed to their new position.

Professor Agassiz did not see any of Mr Jackson's specimens, but subsequently obtained a number caught at the same spot, and sent to him preserved in spirits, by a Mr Cary. To the account of the bag given by Mr Jackson, he adds the following interesting particulars.* Its surface is covered with large ramifications of blood-vessels, and it is divided internally into a number of distinct pouches, opening by side-slits into the lower part of the sac, which seems, in an anatomical point of view, to be nothing but the widened lower end of the ovary, while the pouches within it are formed by folds of the ovary itself. 'In each of these pouches a young individual is wrapped up as in a sheet, and all are packed in the most economical manner, as far as saving of space is concerned, some having their heads turned forward, and others backward.' In the specimens examined by Professor Agassiz, the number of the young varied. Their size, as compared with their mother, was very remarkable; a specimen ten and a half inches long, and four and a half inches high, containing young ones nearly three inches long, and one inch high. Judging from their size, he at first suspected that the young could move at will in and out of the sac, like young opossums; but, on further investigation, he ascertained that this was impossible; but as these young have fully developed gills, it can hardly be doubted that the water penetrates into the marsupial sack.

Mr Lord, the naturalist to the British North American Boundary Commission, has added considerably to our knowledge of these viviparous fishes in his interesting work entitled *The Naturalist*

* The following details are taken from the professor's Memoir in *Silliman's Journal* for 1854.

in British Columbia, the covers of which are adorned with a gilt figure of the female fish with most of her young shewn *in situ*; while a few that have escaped when the abdomen was opened, are seen lying around her. Mr Lord's discovery of these fishes in Vancouver's Island was made almost simultaneously with Mr Jackson's similar discovery, a long distance off, in California. According to Mr Lord, the geographical range of this fish is from Sitka to the Bay of San Francisco, or possibly much further south. They are abundant on the coast of Vancouver's Island, where they swim close to the surface in immense shoals. When alarmed, they leap high out of the water; and the Indians, by lashing the sea with their paddles, actually frighten the fish to leap into their canoes. He stumbled, like Mr Jackson, upon the discovery of the viviparous nature of these fishes without the slightest previous suspicion of the fact. On dissecting back the walls of the abdomen of the fish in which he made the original discovery, he found a bluish-white bag with folds, in each of which was packed away a little fish, of which there were fourteen. Moreover, he quite confirms Professor Agassiz's statement as to the relatively large size of the young fish as compared with the size of the mother. Dr Gunther, in the British Museum Catalogue of Fishes, vol. iv. page 245 (quoted by Lord in page 353 of his second volume), uses the generic title of *Ditrema* for these fishes, and recognises no less than seventeen species; the illustration to which we have referred being that of the *Ditrema argenteum*. For the benefit of those of our readers who have forgotten their Greek, we may add that the term *Ditrema* indicates that the fish possesses two distinct abdominal apertures.

We shall conclude this article with a notice of the latest, and at the same time the most remarkable of the discoveries of this kind. Professor Agassiz, in his recently published *Travels in Brazil*, gives an account of certain fishes occurring in the Amazon, which carry their young, from the egg-state to that of perfect development, in their mouths. This peculiarity exists in the type of fishes called by the natives *Acará*—a term which they apply to various oval-shaped fishes belonging to several genera. How the eggs are brought into the mouth, has not been ascertained, nor does the professor state whether it is exclusively one of the sexes that possesses this peculiarity; but that the eggs are thus transferred soon after they are laid, is obvious, because eggs in every phase of development are found associated together in that position. Occasionally, instead of eggs, a brood of young, already hatched, was found occupying the cavity of the gills as well as the space enclosed by the gill-membrane. The eggs, before hatching, are always found in the same part of the mouth—namely, in the upper part of the branchial arches, protected by a special lobe or valve, formed by certain bones known to anatomists as the *upper pharyngeals*. The cavity thus occupied by the eggs corresponds exactly to the complex gill-cover of that curious family of fishes inhabiting the East India Ocean, called, from this peculiarity, *Labyrinthici*, of which the Climbing Perch (*Anabas scandens*) is the best known example; and the professor throws out a prophetic hint that the branchial labyrinth of these fishes may possibly be a breeding-pouch as well as a mere respiratory apparatus. This suggestion, coming from such an authority, will doubtless lead some of our medical

officers in the East (many of whom are skilled naturalists) to investigate the life-history of the climbing perch.

In a later part of his voyage, the professor obtained numerous specimens of a new species of these fishes, which furnished a complete embryological series; some of them having their eggs at the back part of the gills; and others, their young in the mouth, in different stages of development, up to those which were a quarter of an inch in length, and able to swim about freely when removed into a vessel of water. The most advanced were always found outside the gills, within the cavity formed by the gill-covers and the branchiostegal membrane whose office it is to close the gill-opening.

A careful anatomical and experimental investigation shewed that the marsupial pouch thus formed in the gill-region is provided with a very sensitive network of nerves, the principal stem of which arises from a special nervous mass (or ganglion) lying behind the cerebellum, in the medulla oblongata (which is the name given to that anterior part of the spinal cord which lies within the cavity of the cranium). Hence, we have a peculiar modification of nervous structure, by which an obvious connection is established between the care of the offspring and the parental organ of intelligence.

In the case of the Australian mammals, the special nature of the climate sufficiently explains why the marsupial arrangement should prevail over that sterile continent. Whether any equally plausible reason can be found to explain why two or three kinds of batrachians, and a few fishes, should deviate in so extraordinary a manner from the ordinary course of nature, we know not: these isolated cases are, as it were, problems to which, at present, we see no solutions, and which must be left to future inquirers in this field of science.

A P E R F E C T T R E A S U R E.

CHAPTER III.—MRS BLUNT'S VISIT.

On the ensuing day, Mrs Eleanor Blunt drove *Proudfoot*—in whose steadiness and decorum she had, ever, the same misplaced confidence—over to Hershell Point, which was called by those in the immediate neighbourhood ‘the Point,’ and joked upon by my new acquaintance accordingly. She always complained with respect to us that it was impossible to come ‘straight to the Point,’ and called the series of inclines that led to the house from the upper cliff *Voyages en Zigzag*, after the French book of that name, which she lent me, and with the illustrations of which I was hugely delighted. My uncle and she became great friends, to my extreme satisfaction, and not a little to my surprise. I had felt an apprehension that this *littératur* and bookworm would not have properly appreciated my kind protector, who rarely read anything but the *Gardeners' Chronicle*, and had pronounced one of Mrs Blunt's own *chef-d'œuvre*, which I had once persuaded him to attempt, as ‘fudge.’ I did not then understand that ‘character’ is more attractive to a person of genius—and such Mrs Eleanor Blunt decidedly was—than any mere sympathies of taste.

She was charmed with Uncle Theo's modest yet perfectly independent air, his natural talk, his manly carriage; and he, on his part, received with something more than courtesy a lady who did not spare her praises of his nephew. I will never own, even to

myself, that Mrs Blunt was insincere; but although no flatterer, she was an adept in the art of pleasing. 'I had expected,' she confessed to me as I accompanied her part of the way home that evening, 'to have found in the ex-maharajah a sort of Dugald Dalgetty; instead of that, he is a Bayard: he could surely have never picked up that stately courtesy at the court of Bundelbad with that wonderful woman.' Here she became a little hysterical, and had to wipe her eyes. The fact is, I had shewn her the portrait of my eccentric aunt-in-law, not without some pardonable pride; for surely if to be illegitimately descended from royalty is a matter for self-complacency, how much more to be lawfully, although indirectly, connected with it. 'You need never fear,' she went on, perceiving in me some discomfort, 'my putting that guardian angel of yours into a book. Such a life-history as his could be only fitly written in lively French. And yet,' mused she, 'no Frenchman would understand him. If there is something of Murat and Warren Hastings about that capital relative of yours, there is more of Uncle Toby.'

'That is quite true, madam,' said I gravely.

She looked at me with a comical air, as though she would have said: 'You are young for Sterne, Master Marmaduke,' but uttered no remark. She was desirous at that time, if not of discouraging my literary proclivities, at least of not forcing them into premature activity. She had had too much experience of juvenile geniuses to take them at their self-estimated value; and she had too kindly a regard for me to assist, without some proof of my fitness for that calling, in my 'devoting myself to literature'—a phrase that has more of its primary Juggernautish signification about it than neophytes are apt to imagine. I am bound to say that while discussing my favourite branches of reading in a manner that could not but enhance them in my eyes, she parried every leading question that I put to her with respect to the profession of letters, and when she spoke of it in the abstract, always called it 'that heart-breaking business.'

Still, when I at last did put the question: 'Then why have embraced it yourself, good Mrs Blunt?' it was difficult even for her to reply to me, boy as I was: 'Because I felt I was fit for it; whereas you, Master Marmaduke, are not fit, being a goose.' She only gave a great sigh, and said: 'You may bring your manuscripts to-morrow, my dear—all the best of them, that is—but I shall never like your works one-half so much as I like *you*'—which was, I thought, but a left-hand sort of compliment.

The selection thus imposed upon me proved a very invidious one, although my own genius was alone concerned. If one of my precious manuscripts excelled in imagination or fancy, another had the pre-eminence in pathos. Fortunately for Mrs Blunt, *Wildred the Half-caste* was too bulky to be put in my pocket, or perhaps even in her pony-carriage, had I borrowed that equipage for the purpose. I only took a specimen chapter or two, to give her an idea of my more elevated style, half-a-dozen shorter narratives, and about ten pounds weight of poems, all in a knapsack.

The expression of my talented friend's face as I exhibited these works *en masse* upon her drawing-room carpet—for the table could not hold them—would have been a study for Gustave Doré: 'Don't you think you could winnow them just a little more?' inquired she pathetically; whereupon I

did take out three or four exquisite poems, although it was like parting with my heart's blood.

'You shall read these afterwards,' said I, 'if you like the rest.'

'Thanks, my dear,' said she with gravity; but I saw from the motion of her shoulders that she was laughing; the dear little lady was so plump, that mirth very literally 'moved' her—it set her wabbling like *blanc-mange*.

In the course of that week, Mrs Eleanor Blunt passed judgment upon my literary efforts. It was her custom to write to me almost every day. I never knew any one at once so skilful with her pen and so willing to use it. Famous authors are generally chary of their epistolary favours; they do not like to write for nothing when they can earn a shilling a line; or perhaps it would be more charitable to say that they have enough of professional writing to tire them, and are obliged to cut short their communications to their friends. But Mrs Blunt, though one of the most prolific of English writers, wrote more private letters than any of those poor idle women who suffer from *cacoethes scribendi*, and they were long letters too; although, being written in a microscopic hand ('Which I practised for cheapness' sake, my dear, in times when the cost of postage was very heavy'), they occupied but little space.

In yonder desk lie at least three hundred of them, marvels of wit and sense; and one lock of snow-white hair from her wrinkled forehead, which I value more than all. Yes; here it is:

And my own breath
Stirs its thin outer threads, as though beside
The living head I stood in honoured pride,
Talking of lovely things that conquer death.
She pressed it oftentimes, and underneath
Ran her fine fingers.

But to my story.

Her verdict was passed by letter.

'I HAVE read your manuscripts, dear Marmaduke,' wrote she, 'and some of them with an interest quite independent of the writer. They are very unequal, though the worst of them have some redeeming points. There is nothing so good as to enable me to say: "This boy will make his mark." The very best of the poems is but an echo. Still, they are better than Lord Byron's were at the same age; and, in my humble opinion, we have had no such poet in this country in my time as Byron. I knock you down with one hand, you see, and pick you up with the other, just as the National schoolmaster here boxes his boys' ears (for I have seen him do it). The fact is, you have placed a responsibility on me which I must shift in part from my own shoulders to those of your good uncle; it is too grave for me to bear alone. If the promise exhibited in what you have written were less than it is—that is, considerably less—I should say: "Give up this cherished idea of a literary life, and be content with an ordinary calling;" if the promise were only a little more, I should not hesitate to say: "You are born for letters, and will be a successful writer." But as it is, the matter, being in doubt, becomes a mere question of finance. I know nothing of your pecuniary prospects, my dear; indeed, you seem to know nothing about them yourself. (Do not suppose that is in your favour; it is a popular error that assigns as an attribute of genius an inaptitude for business

affairs. It is quite possible—though, of course, this is not your case—to be stupid at everything.) Well, you must go to your uncle, and find out what is likely to be your future position. If you are always to possess a moderate independence, or even a small one, then you may become a literary man, as the loose phrase goes, and not trouble yourself about another pursuit. But if you are to be a poor man, or to be left poor when that good friend of yours shall have departed (a sort of friend that is very rare, Marmaduke), take the advice of one who has been exceptionally fortunate in a very risky trade, and eschew literature as a calling altogether. You have more than once heard me call it a "heart-breaking business," and I was born tough. I never much cared for what people said of me, and still less of what they wrote. But you, my poor Marmaduke.

Who killed John Keats?
I, said the *Quarterly*—
With my Review so slanchterly,
I killed John Keats.

And John Keats, whom I knew well, had the hide of a rhinoceros compared with yours, which is but goldbeaters' skin. Yes, you'll be fool enough to read all that the reviewers say about you, and to be tortured by them. I warn you, without forbidding you, as St Paul warns young ladies upon the subject of matrimony; you will have trouble in the flesh. Yes, my dear, this in any case; and though your union with literature should be the happiest on record. But this inconvenience is nothing compared with the combination of poverty and failure. My good boy, let me entreat of you to have another string to your bow, to have another weapon to fight the battle of life with beside the pen, if you are destined to be poor. The most successful writer of any age has left it on record that "literature is a good staff, but a very bad crutch;" and he never wrote a more pregnant sentence. I paraphrase it, for fear of misinterpretation. It is a perilous thing to trust to this profession of letters for sole support, although it may supplement an income very agreeably. Perilous? Nay, the stage itself is not a more wretched calling (and I well know the wretchedness of *that*), nor one in which it is more difficult for the aspirant to undecieve himself. The author and the actor who have mistaken their professions are scarce to be convinced by starvation itself. I do not wish, however, to overstate the case: you may not starve, but you will certainly not carry the heights of Literature by assault. You will wait outside in the cold, it may be, for years; your manuscripts unaccepted, or, if accepted, ill paid—perhaps unpaid. When Shakespeare talks of the "insolence of office, and the spurns that patient merit of the unworthy takes," he must have had a prescient eye to editors. My *Hearths and Homesteads*—the best work of its day, I may say now, I suppose—was refused by six of these critical gentlemen, and eventually made the fortune of a publisher. Now, constant rejection, which is only galling to the man of means, is to the poor man Death. I hope, my dear lad, I have thus written enough to warn you against going into such a profession as that of letters without well counting the cost. As to other callings, your uncle is, of course, the proper counsellor, and you will be guided by him.—Always your affectionate well-wisher,

ELEANOR BLUNT.'

This courteous communication was a sad blow to me; for, conscious of my own merits, I had expected a decision of a very different sort. I say 'decision,' because it was at Uncle Theo's desire, as much as my own, that I had placed those ill-appreciated manuscripts in the hands of Mrs Blunt, and her verdict, it was agreed, was to be final. 'You can scarcely be an unprejudiced judge of your own productions, Marmy,' he had replied to me when I spoke of becoming an author; 'and as for Sangaree and myself, we are no critics. But this good lady at Sandford is in a position to say "Yes" or "No" to the question: let her see all that you have written, all those effusions which seem so excellent to yourself, and so unintelligible, because I am so stupid, to me, and let us hear her advice, and follow it.'

My heart had yearned towards my generous, simple-hearted guardian as he thus spoke. Notwithstanding certain hints of an Indian Civil Service appointment, which had from time to time dropped from his lips, he would, it was thus made evident, permit me to follow the bent of my own inclination, if I were only pronounced by competent authority adapted for the calling of letters, and I had had no doubt of a favourable verdict. It was true that my manuscript works, both 'prose and worse,' as the wit has termed such, had seen the inside of several publishers' establishments, and of half the magazine offices in England, without the least sign of acceptance: some had been sent back to me with courteous frigidity, with meaningless 'Compliments' or 'Thanks,' and the rest I had a shrewd suspicion were feeding editorial fires. But I comforted myself with what I had read somewhere concerning the exclusiveness of literary cliques, the preference shewn to the staff of a periodical over volunteers, and also with the charitable reflection, that it was only natural that so novel and striking a writer as 'Leo' (for I was fool enough to use a *nom de plume*) should meet at first with envious obstruction.

But I had entertained no apprehension that so excellent a judge of literature as Mrs Eleanor Blunt would fail to see my peculiar merits, and her shortcoming in this respect disappointed me bitterly. It was impossible in her case to attribute it to jealousy, though I did try to reflect that successful persons are generally inclined to discourage others from attempting obstacles which they have themselves surmounted. I was driven to extract what comfort I could from the letter itself. If it was not decisively in favour of my own plans, it was by no means against them. Perhaps Uncle Theo could allow me, without inconvenience, a sufficient income to maintain me until my literary merits were acknowledged, without the necessity of my becoming an Indian judge—a position, by the by, much easier attained at that time than it is at present. Perhaps—but perhaps not. I was as ignorant of my pecuniary position as Mrs Blunt had hinted; I had always felt a delicacy in inquiring about it. I only knew that to Uncle Theo I must be indebted for my future maintenance, as I had so long been for my past. We had never spoken upon the subject at all, except on that one occasion when he had said: 'When I am gone, Marmy, this little place will be your own, and had alluded in that mysterious manner to Tannajee. When I carried Mrs Blunt's letter into my guardian's room, I knew that some

explanation must needs be made, some understanding come to, and I felt myself grow now hot, now cold, not—to do me justice—from anxiety as to my own prospects, but from the unpleasantness of having to enter upon so delicate a subject at all. It was hard to feel myself possessed of so sensitive an organisation, and yet to be denied the more advantageous qualities of genius. I had half a mind to give up my favourite project altogether, and to throw myself at the ex-maharajah's feet with: 'Uncle, I am a born fool; and ready to be a judge in India.'

CHAPTER IV.—THE FIRST HINT OF THE SECRET.

My uncle was in his study, a chamber, however, which scarcely possessed a single book, though it had a desk and an inkstand. Its chief article of furniture was his turning-lathe, at which he would work for hours in constructing a number of ingenious articles in sandal-wood and ivory, vast quantities of which he had brought home with him from the East. Our little drawing-room was so lavishly furnished with these ornaments that it looked like a bazaar. Sangaree Tannajee passed almost as much of his time in this department as his master, under pretence of assisting him; but the obese Hindu had in reality no more experience of mechanics than I had of making chupatties. He would sit smoking my uncle's cheroots upon the carpetless floor, with his legs folded under him, and gaze with lack-lustre eyes at the flying chips and spinning wheel until he fell asleep. It will doubtless seem very indecorous that Sambo should sit smoking, with his hands before him, while his master toiled, but the fact is there were no bounds to that fat scoundrel's idleness and impertinence. He did just what he liked of the work of the house, and that was almost nothing; he treated me with studious insolence (Master Marney was the best name he had for me), and my uncle with at least a great want of respect. In public, indeed—if I may so term the few occasions when we had company at 'the Point'—he used to affect an Eastern servility towards his master (although even this thin polish was gradually wearing off), and salaamed and sahibed in a most ludicrous manner; but when we were alone, his tone was disagreeably familiar, and was growing more so daily.

On the present occasion, when I entered the study with Mrs Blunt's open letter in my hand, Sangaree was seated on the floor as usual, putting his lazy lips to his cheroot just sufficiently often to keep it alight, and lolling his head slowly from side to side like a sick elephant. Uncle Theo, with his coat off, and his pleasant face shining with toil, was listening to him attentively, while the other spoke a few languid words in Hindustanee; and though I knew nothing of their import, it was impossible to misunderstand the self-complacent and offensive air with which they were delivered. It was not the first time nor the second that I had known him thus repay his master's good-nature and forbearance with insolence. I had hitherto, however, abstained from interference (although it must be owned that Master Marney took up the endgives very readily when his own dignity was similarly outraged); but now, being vexed, to begin with, thanks to Mrs Blunt's verdict, I fairly lost my temper with the rascal. 'Sambo,' said I roughly, 'get out; I wish

to speak to my uncle in private. Do you hear, you fat lout? Get out!'

I daresay my manner was rather offensive, as indeed I had meant it to be; but I don't think it was that which annoyed him, so much as my touching the fattest part of his fat person with the tip of my toe. He leaped up with an agility for which I should not have given him credit, and uttered some forcible ejaculations in his native dialect. I believe he also attempted to strike me; but I am not quite sure of that. My uncle was between us in an instant. I had never seen him in a passion before. I could henceforward picture to myself (which I had been hitherto unable to do) how Uncle Theo, sword in hand, at the head of the Begum's irregular cavalry, had looked; or cutting his way through the said troopers when he flew from the embraces of my aunt-in-law. It was not with me that he was thus enraged, but with the Hindu. At first, Tannajee cowered before the storm, and looked, as I have no doubt he was, exceedingly frightened. Then, as the rain of epithets slackened, he began to pluck up a little, to grumble, to gesticulate in his turn; and then to pat his stomach. With Sambo, as with the gorilla, this curious pantomimic action was always indicative of menace; it was somehow a sign, too, that he was growing absolutely dangerous, for it always had its effect upon his master. Upon this occasion, I noticed, with no small sense of humiliation, that my uncle's manner at once became grave and conciliatory. If I had had my way, I would have treated the rascal's ill-temper in a very different fashion. I felt like a planter in the Southern States with respect to this refractory Sambo, or rather as an Englishman in India regarded Hindus during the Mutiny. It is recorded that a cruel sepoy once underwent at the hands of our soldiers the following medical treatment: they gave him all the blue packets in a Seidlitz-powder box, and then all the white ones; and I should like to have tried that cooling prescription upon Mr Sangaree Tannajee whenever he patted his stomach.

I am afraid I may be thought arbitrary and tyrannical, but the fact is it was this scoundrel who was the tyrant of the whole house. He used to swear at Martha the cook, until he made her cry—though she was a tough one too—and absolutely, on one occasion, broke her own broom over the shoulders of our poor little maid-of-all-work, Nancy. His excuse, in the latter case, was (appropriately enough) that he was under the influence of bhang—which was his general name for any sort of spirituous liquor. He got drunk every week of his life upon something or other; gin, Dublin stout, spirits of wine—nothing came amiss to his palate so long as it was strong. He ate little else than rice, but that little was sometimes of an abominable description. He cooked everything for himself with his own hands, and perhaps that made Martha inclined to be scandalous; but she once confided to me that he had carried a cat. I could believe anything of him; and should not have been surprised (since there were opportunities, after storms at Hershell Point, for his indulging in that practice) to find that he was a ghoul, and ate human flesh. Whatever he ate, it must be owned it nourished him, for he was growing obese and unwieldy, and his little eyes sank deeper every day in his fat cheeks. In his person, I am bound to say that Tannajee was scrupulously clean; when not drinking or smoking, he was

always washing, and spent hours at a time in the sea. Unfortunately, as I then thought, there were no sharks in Hershell Bay; for the time was yet far off when, to use my uncle's words, I was to find 'that Tannajeet a perfect treasure.'

I never thought him more utterly worthless than at the present moment, when, as he withdrew from the study, still muttering and grumbling, my uncle turned on me, and gave me the first scolding I ever heard from his lips.

'You are hasty and foolish, young sir,' said he. 'Why do you thus anger that poor fellow?' (I thought of Tartuffe.) 'Because his skin is brown, is that a reason for your hatred?'

'I hate him, uncle, because he is so disrespectful to you.'

'Never you mind that, lad; I can take care of myself, thank you; and besides, he's not wanting in regard for me, although his manner of shewing it may be peculiar.'

'He is a drunkard,' said I, rather sullenly, I am afraid, for his master's forbearance towards this scoundrel seemed to me nothing less than infatuation.

'Perhaps, Marmy,' rejoined Uncle Theo gravely, 'if you were an exile in a foreign country among persons of another race, and even colour, you too would take to drink: many Englishmen do so in India.'

'But he beats the servants.'

'Many Englishmen do so in India,' reiterated my uncle tranquilly: 'we must know how to make allowances for others. At all events, Sangaree Tannajeet was once my faithful and attached follower in very troublous times.'

'O uncle,' cried I, 'pray, pray forgive me; I have behaved unkindly and ungratefully. Henceforward, Sam—I mean Sangaree—shall never be treated otherwise than well by me. I will ask his pardon, if you wish it, immediately.'

'No, no! don't do that, Marmy,' said my uncle rather hastily; 'he would misunderstand you: we must not seem, you see, as if we were afraid of him.' My dear guardian spoke in a hesitating and even painful manner, which I could not understand. But presently he added briskly: 'Come; I forgive you, Marmy; and do you, on your part, forget that I was angry with you. It has never happened before, my lad, has it?'

'O sir,' said I, looking up into that bronzed and comely face, 'I am an ungrateful boy. I have done nothing to deserve your regard, as this faithful fellow doubtless has, and yet I treat him'—

'Huah, hush, lad.'

Uncle Theo stooped down, for though I was a tall youth of my age, he was almost a foot taller, and kissed my forehead; his blue eyes—so tender that they softened the bushy, hard, and grim moustache and weather-beaten features wholly—were moist with tears.—'What is it brings you here, Marmy?'

A few minutes ago, and I had resolved not to shew him Mrs Blunt's communication, but now I felt that I could withhold nothing from him, any more than from the mother whose place he filled for me; so I placed the letter in his hand. He read it very slowly, spelling it out half aloud to himself, for he was not familiar with manuscript. 'She seems a wise and prudent lady, this friend of yours, Marmy,' said he gravely. 'Let us take counsel together over what she says. We agreed, I think, to abide by her decision as respects your literary talents?'

'Yes, uncle,' said I as blithely as I could, but not without a wince.

'Well,' continued he good-naturedly, 'she evidently thinks more highly of them than she trusts herself to speak. If her decision had been dead against you, there would have been nothing for it but for you and me to part: that would have vexed us both, I think. I at least, who am growing old, would have felt very lonely here, with the seas rolling between me and you, lad. Perhaps I should never have seen you again. That Indian life is not what it used to be; the pagoda-tree has been too well shaken. It would have taken you half a lifetime to make your fortune; and even if you had made it more quickly, how much might you have lost in exchange? Look at me, Marmy—an old, ill-thought-of man, without a friend, because my days for friendship-making were passed out yonder.' He pointed across the eastern sea, that stretched below us, a plain of molten gold. 'I am glad my boy is not to be sent to that school.' He stopped, and gazed upon me with a wistful sorrow. 'I wish, Heaven knows,' he went on, 'that I could say: "Follow your own way, Marmy; and whether you succeed or not—whether you gain a shilling by your pen or not, there is enough and to spare for us both." But I cannot do this. It is necessary that you should do something for yourself, not for my sake, but for your own. I have sufficient to last us both so long as I am likely to live, but I have nothing to leave behind me except'—here Uncle Theo hesitated, evidently at a loss to express himself—'except a contingency. I myself may be very rich some day, Marmy. It is almost certain that you will be so. But in the meantime we are poor; every year, every day, we are growing poorer, for the fact is we are living on our principal. Of course this seems to you the height of imprudence; but it is too late to talk of that now. I calculated upon a certain expectation, which did not turn up so soon as I anticipated. Perhaps you are saying to yourself: "Why does my uncle thus speak in riddles?" I cannot help that; I would tell you all if I could: there is no confidence, no secret, which is my own to tell, that I would not reprove in you.'

'I am sure of that, Uncle Theo.'

'I hope so, lad. But, to convince you of it, see here.' He opened a little writing-desk, touched a secret spring, which set free a small drawer, and took from it an envelope, bearing this address upon it: *To my Nephew, Marmaduke Drake. To be opened immediately after his uncle's death.* 'I put this back again, Marmy, in the fullest conviction that you will never break that seal until the proper time arrives.'

Nothing could be more matter of fact and simple than my Uncle Theo's manner. Although his own career, to that large class of persons who 'believe nothing they do not read in a newspaper, or which does not come within their own trumpery experience,' might have seemed a melodrama, he himself (like him who had talked prose all his life without knowing it) was quite unconscious of the fact. Nothing imposed upon him in what he saw of life. The fame of Mrs Eleanor Blunt was no more to him than that of any tradesman whose goods were extensively advertised; the Begum of Bundelbad was in his eyes merely a coarse, passionate woman, like Martha the cook. I am sure it did not seem strange to himself that he should be an ex-maharajah. In short, he was the most

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inartificial as well as straightforward of mankind. Thus, though in so singular a statement from any other man I should have suspected at least exaggeration and stage-effect, I well knew that Uncle Theo had told me the truth, and nothing but the truth (although, for reasons which were beyond his control, it was not the whole truth), concerning our affairs.

'To be still more explicit, Marmy,' continued my uncle, shutting up the desk again: 'we two can live on here as we have hitherto done for the next five years, during which, let us hope, you will be able to establish your footing in literature. If so, you shall help to keep your old uncle; and if not, well, we must sell Hershell Point, and live on the proceeds until better times!'

'You shall never sell "the Point" on my account, dear Uncle Theo,' cried I warmly. 'And oh, if I could but make you rich (not repay you what I owe you, for that is impossible) by my own exertions, how happy should I be! It would be worth all the fame in the world! Five years in which to push my way! I must be a very slow mole indeed, not to get through all difficulties in that time!'

Uncle Theo nodded and smiled, or he was very willing to share the confidence which I felt in my own powers. 'I hope so, lad, indeed; and I am sure it will be your misfortune, and not your fault, if you fail in the matter. We can but do our best, you know, whether we use pen or sabre. But, in the meantime, be civil to Tannajee, though I am afraid (and here he smiled) 'the true worth of that poor fellow will never be discovered by you until he is gone.'

FROM THE ICE-FIELDS.

THE British tourist is little known in Iceland. It is not a polyglot country; he cannot speak the language, and he cannot get on without speaking it; there are no roads in those portions of the island which are especially worth visiting; and the prevailing customs with regard to food are unsatisfactory. These are all sound reasons why the Briton should draw the line of northward travel at Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, and also why we should feel grateful to the enterprising Swedish professor* who has explored the islands thoroughly, as well as to that accomplished scholar, Mr Barnard, who has made so admirable a translation of his work. The country, abounding in natural features of great interest, and in myths and traditions of immense antiquity and significance; and the people, few, but of strongly marked character, of a stern intelligence, and ardent lovers of liberty, form delightful subjects of study for the stay-at-home travellers for whose delectation the dauntless author of the present work underwent so much. Iceland, with her ice-mountains, her warm springs, her volcanoes and streams of lava, her sandy plains and rapid rivers, is 'a land of reminiscences, where well-nigh every spot has its history written by the hand of man. But besides this, it is an open book

of nature, a country where the formation and transformation of the earth's crust take place on so grand a scale that the lapse of even a few years is often sufficient to make the effects of this transforming power evident to the attentive observer.' The exploration is by no means easy, nor is it quite free from danger; it is one of the very few things in the category of travel which still includes self-denial, energy, and courage. The desert tracts are monotonous, the treeless wastes are sad, the fjelds are naked, the mountain torrents are many and boisterous, and their courses are capricious. There is not a little resemblance between the life of the Icelander and that of the Arab, especially in the dependence of both upon their horses. 'The Icelander,' says the professor, 'can scarcely go a single step without his horse; and should this fail him, his life is placed in peril. It must carry him over long and barren wastes, where hardly a handful of grass is to be seen wherewith to appease its hunger, and yet the Icelandic horse has one great advantage over its Arabian congener—it never lacks water!'

On the eighteenth day of a voyage from Copenhagen, the professor saw the lofty islands in Fuglasker, the most south-westerly point of Iceland—the mainland being enveloped in fog, which abounds in the country. A grimly grand spot is this extremity of the volcanic peninsula, with its outlying island of suggestive name—Eldey, or fire-island—haunted by the phantoms of the great auk. What a strange place it must have been, when the ugly monster penguin, with its flabby, swimming flaps instead of wings, was common there! Then came the entrance into the broad Bay of Farajoror, crowned by the Snæfell Jökul, a volcano four thousand five hundred and seventy-seven feet high, whose snow-clad cleft summit rises up from the sea like a pyramid. The only habitable parts of the island are the narrow strips of land running parallel with the coast, or at the bottom of deep valleys. Solemn and forbidding, but in its grim way beautiful, must be that treeless country, with its sharp ridged mountains studding the coast—gigantic partition-walls between the numberless fjords that everywhere intersect it and its wide interior table-lands; a kingdom of fire and of snow, with perpetual tokens of the presence of the fire, fantastic, capricious—the volcanoes now forming solitary and barren crests, rising up from the plains, without any connection with a mountain-ridge or plateau; again, the eruptions taking place on the lower table-lands, without any apparent connection with the mountains themselves. A grave, peaceful, industrious, thoughtful people live in this wonderful country, in the perpetual sight of those natural phenomena which appear to us most awful and imposing, under conditions of existence which are rather quaint and grim than rigorous.

The seaport town of Reykjavik is a miniature of Copenhagen, with two thousand inhabitants, partly Danish, partly Icelandic. Trade is very remunerative, but few of the merchants are residents; their business being done by paid managers, who have also a percentage on profits. The form of the government—separate, except in a financial point of view, from that of Denmark—is simple and satisfactory, and great unanimity and sound public spirit prevail. Of course, there is a 'National' party, but it is moderate in its views as yet, and not obnoxious in its proceedings. The ecclesiastical interest is powerful in the little place.

* *A Summer in Iceland.* By C. W. Paijkull, Professor of Geology at the University of Upsala. Translated by the Rev. M. R. Barnard, B.A. London: Chapman and Hall.

There is a bishop, with a staff of twenty archdeacons, and there are one hundred and ninety-six livings, a pastoral seminary, and an elementary public school. On the whole, an idea of tame, well-to-do respectability is gained from the professor's description of the social aspect of Iceland. Uniformity in dress, buildings, and modes of life, gives a general dulness to the scene, no doubt, which is not contradicted by the wide-spreading ice-fields, and the perpetual menace of Hecla. In the vicinity of Reykjavik are seen the 'rucks' peculiar to Iceland. They are plains of stone and sand, whose surface presents the appearance—owing to the way in which the small stones and pebbles crossbar it—of land-drains in a field. The explanation of the phenomenon is that the earth, rendered soft by the melting of the snow in spring, has become dried by the heat of summer; rifts or cracks are formed in it; and when a storm occurs, the small stones that lie on the surface of the ruck are swept down into them.

Roads do not exist in the interior of Iceland—carts are unknown—all journeys are made, all merchandise is carried on horseback—and the bridle-paths, though good, are singularly embarrassing and disheartening to a stranger, especially when they are crossed by the tumultuous streams which rush down from the enormous snow mountains. There are few bridges, and the strength and rapidity of the currents generally render a ferry impossible. There are no stations for the entertainment of travellers, and the way has few distinguishing marks, consequently, a guide is indispensable. It is not easy to realise that the mere thread of pathway, totally unimportant, like a footway through a field, and actually crossing the bottom of brooks in the road, is the only highway to the far-famed geyser—that world's wonder, named with Niagara and the Victoria Falls. The absence of roads must aid the monotonous appearance of the country, which is doubtless also assisted by the construction of the Icelandic *baers*, or houses, which are built sometimes of earth only, sometimes of earth and stone, and have a turf roof, so that in the summer, when they are covered with green, they can scarcely be distinguished from the adjoining fields. Timber is so expensive to import and carry up the country, that it is seldom seen; and even the clergy and well-to-do farmers have not wooden houses, though they generally contrive to have one room floored. The poorest of the population dwell literally in earthen burrows, though, instead of being underground, they are above it. This is not an inviting description of a peasant's baer: 'The interior, which was very low and dark, formed only one room, one end of which was occupied by two bedsteads, the two side walls, with a small oblong table; and at the other end of the apartment was a store-room, where provisions, wool, moss, &c., were stored away. The fireplace, marked only by a few stones, was in the middle, opposite the entrance. This house possessed no floor, and no other ceiling than the rafters, which sustained the roof of turf. Light was admitted through a couple of small apertures in the roof; and the house was so low that the crossbeams which supported the rafters reached to the middle of the visitor's chest as he stood upright.' It seems wonderful to us that the poor should voluntarily dispense with the comforts of air and light, from which poverty does not debar them. We have

heard the horrors of Irish and Scotch hovels, in this respect, accounted for by the fact, that the need for warmth is predominant; perhaps this also explains the Icelandic *baer*. The dirt in such places is frightful; and though the poor people are hospitable, and anything to eat and drink is not to be despised in a country where there are no inns, it requires real hunger and thirst to induce one to eat under such circumstances. Coffee in Iceland is as universal as tea in Russia or in the bush; the coffee-kettle stands on the fire all day long, and the coffee is excellent. It is the national beverage, with the addition of brandy. The latter is in very reasonable requisition, as damp is a normal constituent of life in Iceland; there is every facility for it afforded by the climate, and neither the roofs nor the walls can keep it out. In one part of the island, fireplaces in living-rooms are absolutely unknown, and the people live in darkness, the houses having no windows, in a loft over the cow-house. Turf and manure, animal and fish bones, and dried sea-weed, form the fuel in use. In houses of the superior class, the guest-room is furnished with a bed, a table, and a few chairs; but the family-room furniture consists only of beds fixed to the wall, and capable of holding two or three persons each. Every one eats his meals sitting upon his bedstead, with his plate and porringer before him. Looking-glasses and chests of drawers are a great rarity.

The national manners are simple and polite; the national tastes are grave; the national female dress is uniform and unostentatious, serviceable and modest. It consists of a tight-fitting, knitted woollen bodice, of dark colour, with tight sleeves buttoned at the wrist, without any decoration; and a wadmel skirt. A striped apron, generally green and red, enlivens this costume, which is completed by the *hjifa*, a characteristic head-dress. It is a small black cap, fastened coquettishly across the temples, and adorned with a long silken tassel. This style of dress is worn by all classes alike, and by married and unmarried women, so that, on meeting an Icelandic woman, it is difficult to define her rank in society. Of course this rule only applies to the country. In the towns, the higher classes dress like other Europeans, perhaps more decently and rationally, but they will not be very long behind the age. The state costume is more barbarously splendid than that of the Hungarians, and must be imposing, stately, and beautiful. The Swedish professor maintains that the Icelandic women are not ugly, and says they have beautiful hair. Both men and women have remarkably prominent eyeballs. The men are not so good-looking as the Swedes and Danes; they are strongly built, with long waists and short legs.

The magnificence of nature contrasts strongly in the remote portions of the island with the dulness and squalor of the lives of the natives. Everything is grand, gigantic, superb, though the whole space for the display of these immensities is comparatively small. Mountains that hide their snowy heads far up in the sky; boundless sandy plains; swift foaming rivers; steep, rocky, perpendicular slopes; tremendous roaring waterfalls; deserts of lava, of ice, of snow, of sand, of stone; the boiling springs which tell of the wondrous chemistry within the bosom of the earth; and beyond all, seldom out of the traveller's sight, on every side the wide surrounding sea. The effect of this piled-up titanic grandeur, whose scale is so exaggerated

that distances are both diminished and increased, must be very remarkable. The lava-fields which stretch away from Reykjavik form a suggestive track for the traveller towards Hecla, and the way is rich, not only in historical records of the terrible fiery floods, and the appalling convulsions of nature which have had their way there, but in wild and wonderful legends. The legendary lore of pagan Iceland must have been amazingly fruitful and picturesque, for so much of it to have survived among so matter-of-fact and coldly practical a people. The professor intended to have visited the crater of the Skaptar volcano, which was the vehicle of the awful eruption of 1783, when it discharged the largest lava-stream ever known, and which has never yet been reached. The account of this fearful occurrence is painfully interesting, including, as it does, details of suffering which do not occur to our minds as naturally ensuing on a volcanic eruption in a place which seems to us so desolate and remote as Iceland. That the fiery mountain should destroy and overthrow, and its cruel might be devastating in the regions under Vesuvius and Etna, is intelligible, but we fail to realise what the Icelandic volcanoes do, in the way of inflicting terror and misery and death. The eruption of 1783, when the lava from Skaptar piled itself to a height of six hundred feet in the ravine, and spread itself over the plains a hundred feet deep, put a stop to the fisheries, because the boats could not go out in the thick smoke which enveloped the entire district for three months. There is a terrible picture in the mere words. The *débris* that fell into the lakes destroyed the trout; the egg-harvest was lost, because the birds were driven away by the eruption; and swans, which used to be caught in great numbers, in the moulting season forsook the place. The grass was destroyed; and the wild plants, such as angelica and Iceland moss, used for food, were buried under the ashes. Early in the winter, the cattle began to shew signs of disease, of a nature never observed before, and peculiarly dreadful and painful. The sheep suffered beyond all the other animals, and died in great numbers. Then came the turn of the human race. The fetid state of the atmosphere, and the impurity of the water, produced a terrible dearth, soon felt with appalling severity. With famine came pestilence, in the shape of a frightful disease, resembling the worst form of scurvy. In the little district of Skaptarfell alone, one hundred and fifty persons died early in 1784. In one farm, all the inmates were attacked, so that there was not literally a single person left to nurse and succour the infected; and the dead had to lie as they were struck down, till news of the disaster was conveyed by travellers to other places. Many of these had had for their only subsistence the flesh and milk of the diseased animals, or old hides that had been boiled down. This was one of the most terrible epochs in the history of Iceland.

Dried fish, smoked mutton, and bread (made not in ovens, but in iron pots), of which very little is eaten in Iceland in comparison with other countries, is the staple food. The poorer classes use a mixture of oil and tallow instead of butter, and all Icelanders are addicted to the eating of fat. A fable, with an implied moral, is founded upon this national predilection: 'A man, named Fusi, seated himself one Christmas-eve at a cross-road, to wait for the elves, who come at this time with their

riches. It is only necessary not to speak to them, or take anything from them during the whole of the night, otherwise they will vanish, and all their riches are turned into stones. But when the sun rises, one must say: "God be praised, now it is morning in the heavens!" and the elves vanish, leaving their stores behind them. Fusi, then, was sitting by the cross-road, and an elf came to him, and asked him if he would not partake of a piece of fat. The temptation was too great to be resisted, and he replied: "Fat have I never refused!" But alas! fat, elves, and all vanished from his sight.'

The professor believes that the extent of forest in Iceland, in the prehistoric period, has been exaggerated. The forest limit in the interior of Scandinavia is two thousand five hundred feet under the limit of snow, and he believes this to be the limit in Iceland also, and that forests could not have existed on the table-lands. He considers that Iceland lies above the region of fir, neither fir nor pine growing there, but only the dwarf and common birch; also because its flora is exclusively alpine; and finally, from the low-altitude of the limit of snow above the sea. The physical geography, the geology, and the mineralogy of this wonderful country, are full of interest: the little space devoted to them makes one wish for at least another volume. Whale-fishing, which must be unspeakably disgusting in reality, is always interesting in books, and in a description of Iceland has naturally a prominent place. Naturalists hold that the whale is not plentiful on the coast, and it must be remembered that a very little whale goes a very long way. The islanders are fond of a dish made from an intermediate layer of its flesh, which lies nearest the bones, but is not quite blubber, called *rengi*. This delicious *plat*, which is first boiled, for the extraction from it of lamp-oil, then soured in sour whey, is said to resemble 'something between pork and the muscles of a bullock, is of a whitish-yellowish colour, and tastes like pickled pork.' The professor asks: 'Can I give a more appetising description of it?' Hardly.

The Icelanders supply the Spanish market with dried fish, which is called *klip*. This is cod-fish, not salted in barrels, but in open heaps, so that the brine runs off; it is afterwards laid on the rocks to be dried. Stores of this preparation are kept in every house for winter consumption. The fish is first beaten on a stone, in order to separate the meaty fibres a little, for it can then be more easily divided into small pieces, which each person accommodates to the size of his mouth and the state of his teeth; for after the fish has been beaten, it is ready for the table. It is then torn in pieces with the fingers, which here usurp the place of knives and forks. The fisheries are much neglected, the French reaping almost the whole of the rich harvest of the seas. Farming is very imperfect, and the products of the country in minerals are only beginning to attract attention. The people are unprogressive and reserved. They regard emigration with horror, and emigrants as traitors. There are few mechanics in the country. The fine arts are not cultivated; a taste for the beautiful is not developed. There are no national songs, and dancing is very rare. There is one clever young painter, but he is not encouraged. The only art which finds patrons in Iceland is that of working gold. Even in this, all the patterns are memorials from olden days; and the wrought gold is used only on the national state costume. Few

Icelanders are students of nature, though they live amid her wonder and sublimity. When students at all, they are theologians. On the whole, they are an unsatisfactory people, respectable and staid, but wanting in grandeur, and the ideal qualities which make a race interesting. The political position of the country is vague : no one seems to know what its precise relation to Denmark is. When the mines are about to be worked by great companies, the position will be defined, no doubt to the satisfaction of the bigger parties concerned. At present, Iceland is sometimes called a colony, sometimes a province, and finally, a new word has been coined, and it is called a dependency. The Icelanders acknowledge no such title, but simply call it 'The Land.' Not a wholly unprosperous or contemptible little country, it has fallen into obscurity, and it is hard to believe in what it was from the beginning of the twelfth to the middle of the fourteenth century, when it produced that remarkable, that splendid literature, which is justly Iceland's pride, 'and which,' says the professor, 'has been instrumental in preserving, up to the present day, the knowledge of that language which our forefathers spoke—a language which is of the last importance to the proper understanding of our own tongue; while at the same time the historical portions of this literature, the Sagas, are the sources of the ancient history of the countries of the north, whether as regards actual occurrences, customs, or morals.'

To the pages of that ancient literature we must turn, if we would find congruity between the dwellers in Iceland, and that marvellous land of the burning mountains, of the boundless ice-fields, of the grand treeless wastes, Saharas of the north, of the boiling lake and the Great Geyser.

A PACK OF DEMONS.

I KNEW the Chieveley Pack—as fine a pack of hounds as ever ran a fox to earth. Everybody said so, and therefore the assertion will not bear contradiction. I never saw, for my part, that they were more in number, or finer-looking, or had better runs than the Pytchley, or the Puckeridge, or Essex, or Southwold hounds—packs that I have often gazed upon, when a southerly wind and a cloudy sky proclaimed a hunting morning. I knew Jerry Ball, too, the old huntsman—as dry an old stick as ever blew horn, or curled the long thong of his whip round some truant young hound's flank. Proud of his pink was Jerry; and when, with a fresh season, he came out with what Captain Castigan used to call a 'new shoot,' I don't think that he would have doffed that black-velvet-covered head-case of his to a prince. He was like his horse, and a better-matched pair never went to meet. They were both of the style that sporting-men would term 'weedy'; for Jerry was dry and withered, and had a blue nose, while his back rose up like that of a wet mouse. As for Jerry's legs, they seemed regularly to have grown to fit round the ribs of his old hunter, so that they seemed almost to belong to one another—Jerry and his horse; and if anything was to be cleared, or gone through, those were the two who would do it. Jerry certainly had two eyes, but one was

half-closed, from the lid being drawn over it in a perennial wink: and here again there was a likeness; for Old Bones, his horse, had also lost one eye, while, as if in imitation of his master, he would hang his head down, set up his back, and crook his old legs in the most extraordinary manner. See him then, and you would value him at knacker's market-price; but that would be through ignorance, for you did not know him. Languid swells on satin-coated steeds said he was a disgrace to the Hunt; but the old master would chuckle to himself, and his huntsman retained his steed. Wait until he was called upon, and then see what Old Bones could do; he would throw up that old coffin-shaped head of his, wag his ragged old tail, curve his spine for a few moments, and perform the feat known amongst 'horsey' men as 'bucking'; and then he went off; and if you kept steadily at the tail of the pack like he did, right through the run, why, all I can say is, that you were well mounted.

One wit of the followers of the Hunt compared him to an unfinished horse, saying that the framework was there, but it had not been clothed. However, Jerry and Old Bones went well together; and everybody agreed that there was no such pack of hounds anywhere as those yclept the Chieveley.

I had the misfortune at that time to dwell near the kennel; a handsome, brick-and-stone faced building, that would have been no disgrace to a gentleman if he had pointed it out as his shooting-box: pleasantly situated on the slope of a hill, with a splendid sweep of woodland scenery around: to the right, the broad lake, glistening through park-like patches of beech and oak; to the left, the tall sand-hills, crowned with many a darkling whispering grove of pines; while in front, far away till the distant dim blue hills cloud the view, one long stretch of valley. A rare hunting country; no ring-fences of wire here; no stone walls; but plenty of tolerable hedges and ditches, with now and then a stiff timber-fence, a bullfinch, or a brook to lend a charm to the tract.

One nuisance to me in this propinquity was the frequent arrival, and consequent passage past my gate—not of the butcher's cart with joints, but of what took its place—namely, that of the felt-monger of the neighbouring town, driven by one Dicky Bird, a strange-looking, dwarfish creature, whose duty it was to unclothe the dead horse, cow, sheep, or lamb for the tannery; to cut up the animal for the sake of its tallow and glue-making material, and then cart off the flesh in large lumps to the kennel; and I can say, that in summer the odour given out by this Bird of prey, the cart and contents, was anything but desirable.

However, the hounds had to be fed; and the lumps of meat were forked out, and at due time, and in prescribed quantity, distributed amongst the members of the pack.

Hounds will be hounds; and at times, there would arise such a demoniacal din, such a howling and yelling, as would make the listener toss in his bed. Why, I have slept with those demons howling in

my ears, and dreamed of such horrors that it would freeze your blood ; while the worst of it was that you could not get used to the noise. You might accustom yourself to one particular howl, and bear with it pretty tolerably ; but before a week had passed, you would find that some genius, proud of his noise, had invented a new solo in some horrible minor key, to which he would give vent the first fine night, with *da capo* unlimited ; when, as if either in ecstasy or horror, the whole pack would join in chorus, as Captain Cuttle says, ‘with a will’ ; and then it was sleep no more, for sleep was banished. Well, in time you would get over that ; but there would come another, and another, and another—all perfectly new chants, with a heavy chorus attached ; and it was quite wonderful to what a pitch they carried variety. I grew in time to know every hound by its noise—Gaylad, Juno, Merrilegs—all of them ; or, at least, I believed that I did, and often wished that I did hunt, if only for the sake of having a long-lashed whip, on purpose to lay about me well, when occasion served, though at last they completely vanquished me, those tormentors did.

There came a night when the howling was something unbearable ; and even now, when I recall it, a cold shudder creeps through my frame. The pack had been very quiet all the evening, and I was congratulating myself ; for the wind set dead down upon my place, and if there had been a noise, I should have had the full benefit. But my reprieve was not for long. I had just looked up at the timepiece on the mantel-shelf, and seen that it wanted yet a quarter of twelve, so, giving the fire a friendly poke, and putting on just one more knob, I settled back in my chair for just one quarter of an hour before bed.

I had hardly read a line through before there came a whimper, and I shuddered in dread of what was coming, since experience had taught me the meaning of those little alarm-notes. Then came a howl in C major, followed in about twenty seconds by another in E minor ; then there was a chromatic scale sung half-way through, but evidently broken in half for want of breath ; then, without cessation, came bark, bay, and howl of the most outrageous description. Please to bear in mind that it was of fifty-dog power, while every brute was exerting himself to the uttermost, and I was only about an eighth of a mile distant.

Evidently, it was too much this, even for poor old Jerry ; for, after closing my book in despair, and making a couple of cotton-wool plugs ready for insertion where sound enters, I suddenly heard a fierce yelping take the place of the barks and howls ; and, in imagination, I could see old Jerry, whip in hand, laying about him most vigorously, making the long twining thong wreath and twist about the flanks of the howling fiends who disturbed my rest ; and I mentally determined to ask the old man to take a flagon of home-brewed the next time he passed my way.

Then came peace ; and once more calling upon imagination, I saw Jerry leave the kennel, and

enter his cottage, preparatory to going to bed. Thinking the old man’s plan sensible, I rose, and followed his example ; but my head had hardly touched the pillow, before the din recommenced, apparently with tenfold fury. I drew the curtains—I stopped my ears—I put the clothes over my head—I resolutely set myself to go to sleep ; but all was in vain ; and, at last, sitting up in bed, I was trying to recollect a few good round canine Eastern oaths wherewith to curse the whole pack, when my features relaxed into a grin ; and I chuckled and rubbed my hands ; for, plainly enough, in the silence of the night, I could hear that Jerry had come down again, and was plying that whip of his right and left, and most effectually too, from the howling it produced.

Silence once more ; but sleep seemed chased from my eyes ; and but for the badness of the habit, I should gladly have had a smoke, to calm my ruffled feelings. However, I lay, I should think, for about a quarter of an hour awake, when there was a little outbreak of yelling, just enough to rouse me up a little, and keep me awake for another quarter of an hour ; when, after perfect silence, the noise began again worse than ever—howl, yell, bark, bay—they seemed to be excelling themselves ; and gnashing my teeth with rage, I lay still, and composed an artfully worded advertisement to send to the morning papers, offering this desirable bachelor-residence *upon lease*, with immediate occupation, setting forth the fishing, shooting, and hunting ; but not mentioning the kennel, as a matter of course ; and then I grinned as I anticipated trapping some unfortunate wretch, with hunting proclivities, into dwelling there, and suffering my tortured nights.

But the storm still kept on for a few moments, after I had determined where applicants were to address, and I was just saying to myself : ‘Why the dickens doesn’t he get up and thrash them ?’ when once more I heard the yelps and cries as the whip fell amongst these disturbers of my rest.

‘Give it them well this time, Jerry,’ I muttered ; and I was thinking that if I had been there, I should have applied the but-end as well as the lash of the flagellator, when all at once the yelling changed to another familiar sound—that of the growling, worrying, and snarling over food. ‘Ah !’ I thought, ‘bribing them into silence, eh ? Best plan, perhaps ;’ and as I mentally saw the old fellow pitchforking leg and thigh bones into the kennel, I could picture him giving two ravenous brutes toppers upon the skull with the fork-handle.

‘That was a sharp one, at all events,’ I muttered, as apparently following a blow from the heavy staff, there floated out upon the night-air a horrible cry, and then another and another, different to any that I had heard before, but plainly enough produced by suffering, as they rang out above the fierce worrying sounds.

‘They’ll be quiet now, at all events,’ I thought, while I pictured the grim old man labouring the dogs in his anger at being fetched out of bed ; and then I fell asleep, to dream that I had let my house, and was dwelling in a sunny part of the country, where there was neither cat, dog, nor east wind, when I was awaked by a knocking at the door, and a noise I knew well enough as that of a neighbour, asking me to get up and come down.

‘Here ; come in,’ I exclaimed, pulling the string

of the night-latch ; and, coming in, he hurriedly informed me of the object of his visit.

'It's not seven yet,' he said. 'My man told me ; came and knocked me up ; and I thought I'd do the same by you before I went. Horrible, isn't it ?'

'Frightful !' I ejaculated, dressing as hurriedly as I could ; and a quarter of an hour after we were up at the kennel, where we met the old master of the hounds, looking pale as death, and holding a freshly discharged double-gun in his hand, which trembled with agitation.

'I've killed two of the devils,' he said, turning back with us.

'There's no doubt about it, then ?' I said anxiously.

'Doubt, sir ?' he exclaimed. 'Look here !' And turning into an outhouse where they were laid, I looked for a moment at something, and then turned shuddering away.

No ; there was no doubt about it. You remember what followed, when Jehu said : 'Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her ; for she is a king's daughter.' It was almost the same here, for there was little more left of poor old Jerry than of royal Jezebel.

I told what I had heard, shuddering, for I recalled the strange cries, and knew now well enough what they meant.

'He ought to have known better,' said the old master, pointing to a torn and stained rag which a groom had brought out of the kennel. 'His clothes are all by his bedside, and he must have come down in his shirt, and entered the kennel. Animals know you as much by your clothes as by anything else, and they could not have known him when they saw the white figure come amongst them.'

IN THE PORTRAIT-GALLERY AT SOUTH KENSINGTON.

WHAT a strange mystic influence falls
Upon me from these gazing walls.

Silent I feel strange mysteries
Look down from these beholding eyes.

I seem to breathe a doubting breath
Of death in life—of life in death.

What are you, painted shades that seem
Day wanderers from the land of dream !

Life-seemings that have found your way,
From worlds we know not, back to day.

Whence is the awe with which I tread
Through your long ranks, ye living dead !

The felt half-fear that haunts these aisles
With once-known wisdom, once-loved smiles !

With semblance grave or gay as when
Not painted lines you lived, but men.

Come you, we ask, from awful glooms,
Acquaint with secrets of the tombs ?

Bring those lips power, to us, to tell
Of those new homes in which you dwell,

Of that great secret, in our turn,
We from the unseen too shall learn ?

Even as I gaze, ye seem to me
The glasses of eternity ;

In your unchanging steadfast gaze
Lives not the life of mortal days.

We come as ye came ; we shall go
As ye went ; change ye will not know.

Immortals, in our mortal air,
Our doom of time ye do not share.

Down to its depths the dim past drew
Your fellows, but it gulfed not you.

Barks from far seas of ages gone,
Ages to come will float you on.

Deaths, that are lives to us through art,
Would ye your knowledge could impart.

Watchers of life, would you could say
Your thoughts of us you see to-day.

What think you of our times' vain strife ?
Of all we fleeting shades call Life !

From you, impassive, should we wile
Or wrath or pity, frown or smile ?

Or both ? Methinks that passing well
Fancy your utterance can tell.

See not, those unpronouncing eyes,
Wise men half-fools, and fools half-wise ?

In men, find they not older boys,
Busied with games, and pleased with toys ?

Puppets, through time, our parts we play
As you did in your little day.

Ah ! too, like yours, our sports will cease ;
We too, like you, shall pass to peace.

To peace ? O say, to peace or strife ?
Or, change to change, from life to life ?

Who knows ? Death, that our sight shall clear,
When we shall pass, and leave you here,

With watching eyes, and lips still dumb,
To times to be, and men to come.

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